

What is claimed is:

1. A method for creating a composite digital work having usage rights, said method comprising:
  - a) creating a digital content portion of a composite digital work including a plurality of content parts; and
  - b) creating a description structure for said composite digital work, said description structure comprising a plurality of description blocks containing usage rights associated with at least a corresponding at least one of said content parts, said usage rights specifying a manner of use for the corresponding one of said content parts, said manner of use indicating one or more stated purposes for which the corresponding digital content portion can be at least one of used and distributed by an authorized user.
2. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein said step (a) comprises the steps of:
  - a1) creating a first content part of said composite digital work;
  - a2) creating a second content part of said composite digital work; and
  - a3) combining said first content part and said second content part to form said content portion.
3. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein said step (b) comprises:
  - b1) creating a first description block associated with said first content part;
  - b2) creating a second description block associated with said second content part; and
  - b3) creating a third description block associated with the combination of said first content part and said second content part.
4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein said steps (a2) and (b2) comprise obtaining an existing digital work having a description block associated therewith as said second content part and said second description block.
5. The method as recited in claim 3 wherein said step (b) comprises linking said first description block, said second description block and said third description block in a manner

corresponding to the organization of said composite digital work.

6. The method as recited in claim 3 further comprising the step of storing said composite digital work in a repository.

7. The method as recited in claim 6 wherein said storing step comprises the steps of storing said description structure in a first storage means and storing said digital content portion in a second storage means.

8. The method as recited in claim 7 wherein each of said first description block, said second description block and said third description block comprise a pointer to a corresponding content part stored in said second storage means and a control information part storing usage rights for said corresponding part of said content portion and wherein said step of creating a first description block comprises specifying a first set of usage rights and storing the first set of usage rights in said control information part of said first description block.

9. The method as recited in claim 8 wherein said step of creating a third description block comprises specifying a second set of usage rights and storing the second set of usage rights in said control information part of said third description block.

10. The method as recited in claim 3 wherein said step of creating said second content part comprises extracting said second content part from an existing digital work.

11. The method as recited in claim 8 wherein said step of creating a third description block comprises specifying a second set of usage rights and storing the second set of usage rights in said control information part of said third description block, said second set of usage rights including a usage right indicating that no subsequent description blocks for specifying usage rights may be added to the description structure.

12. A method for assigning usage rights to a composite digital having a content portion that

includes a plurality of content parts that each correspond to an individual digital work, said method comprising:

a) creating a description structure for said composite digital work, said description structure comprising a plurality of description blocks that each correspond to a content part of the composite digital work;

b) storing usage rights associated with a corresponding at least one of said content parts in the description blocks, said usage rights specifying a manner of use for the corresponding one of said content parts, said manner of use indicating one or more stated purposes for which the corresponding digital content portion can be at least one of used and distributed by an authorized user.

13. The method as recited in claim 12 wherein the composite digital work includes a first content part and a second content part and wherein said step (a) comprises the steps of:

a1) creating a first description block associated with said first content part of said composite digital work;

a2) creating a second description block associated with said second content part of said composite digital work; and

a3) creating a third description block associated with a combination of said first content part and said second content part.

14. The method as recited in claim 13 wherein said first description block, said second description block and said third description block are linked in a manner corresponding to the organization of the composite digital work.

15. The method as recited in claim 14 wherein each of said first description block, said second description block and said third description block is comprised of a pointer to a corresponding one of said content parts and comprise a control information part storing usage rights for said corresponding part of said content portion and wherein said step of creating a first description block for said first content part is further comprised of the step of specifying a first set of usage rights and storing the first set of usage rights in said control information part of said first description block.

16. The method as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of creating a third description block for said composite digital work comprises specifying a second set of usage rights and storing the second set of usage rights in said control information part of said third description block.

17. The method as recited in claim 14 wherein said step of creating a third description block comprises specifying a second set of usage rights and storing the second set of usage rights in said control information part of said third description block, said second set of usage rights including a usage right indicating that no subsequent description blocks for specifying usage rights may be added to the description structure.

18. A composite digital work having usage rights, said composite digital work comprising:  
a digital content portion including a plurality of content parts; and  
a description structure for said composite digital work, said description structure comprising a plurality of description blocks containing usage rights associated with at least a corresponding at least one of said content parts, said usage rights specifying a manner of use for the corresponding one of said content parts, said manner of use indicating one or more stated purposes for which the corresponding digital content portion can be at least one of used and distributed by an authorized user.

19. The composite digital work as recited in claim 18 wherein said digital content portion comprises a first content part of said composite digital work and a second content part of said composite digital work.

20. The composite digital work as recited in claim 19 wherein said description structure comprises a first description block associated with said first content part, a second description block associated with said second content part, and a third description block associated with said first content part and said second content part in combination.

21. The composite digital work as recited in claim 20, wherein said second content part comprises an existing digital work having a description block associated therewith.

22. The composite digital work as recited in claim 20 wherein said first description block, said second description block and said third description block are linked in a manner corresponding to the organization of said composite digital work.

23. The composite digital work as recited in claim 20 wherein each of said first description block, said second description block and said third description block comprise a pointer to a corresponding content part and a control information part storing usage rights for said corresponding part of said content portion.

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